

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER ROBERT M. MCDOWELL**

Re: *Policies to Promote Rural Radio Service and to Streamline Allotment and Assignment Procedures*, MB Docket No. 09-52

I am pleased to support this First Report and Order (“Order”), which affords a priority under Commission rules to Native American Tribes, Alaska Native Villages, and tribal consortia (“Tribes”) to assist them in obtaining new radio stations designed to serve their tribal communities. As of today, Tribal lands and Alaska Native lands are some of the most under-served parts of America. Our rule change is designed to be a solid first step in fostering the development of new stations owned and controlled by Tribes to serve their communities on tribal lands.

By affording the Tribes an improved opportunity to provide news, information, entertainment and public safety alerts to their members, this initiative comports well with the Commission’s charge under Section 307(b) of the Communications Act to provide a “fair, efficient and equitable distribution of radio service” across the nation. It also is consistent with the Commission’s longstanding recognition of tribal sovereignty and the federal trust relationship between the U.S. government and federally recognized Native peoples. Moreover, the new rule is tailored to advance the interests of the Tribes in a manner that satisfies Supreme Court precedent concerning both tribal sovereignty and the Equal Protection Clause of the Constitution.

On a more practical note, I also hope that the new stations that result – whether AM or FM, commercial or noncommercial – help to promote tribal self-sufficiency and economic development. I thank the staffs of the Media Bureau and the Office of the General Counsel for their work on the Order.